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November 12 2008 Meeting Minutes

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes – Final November 12, 2008

Present: Sheri Baron, Marissa Briggett, Vice Chair Vita Cohen, Stacy Davison, Christine Deshler, Chair Nick Minton, Judson Pierce, Nancy Rhoads, Marlene Schultz, Bill Shea, Nancy Sweeney

Absent: Christine Carney, Jorge Loayza

Chair Minton welcomed Judson Pierce to the commission. The School Committee has appointed Commissioner Pierce.

Open Forum – Sunila Thomas-George, Commission Against Discrimination member, spoke tonight seeking support from the HRC for their outreach and education programs. She gave a detailed description of the history and workings of the commission and requested the AHRC to renew a relationship with them. Chair Minton expressed our limited resources and the need for our members to be trained to support MCAD cases. Commissioner Baron requested a detailed proposal on what the MCAD expects of us. Chair Minton explained the process in which AHRC handles complaints and advised that the HRC will take the request under advisement and will get back to her.

Review of October Minutes – Commissioner Rhoads made a motion to accept the October Minutes as amended - motion seconded by Commissioner Shea – there were two abstentions.

Race and Place Dialogue Series Update – Overall the first two sessions went very well. The next meeting is Wednesday, November 19th. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Networks and Coalitions –

ACT– Commissioners were asked to think about the vision and goals of ACT –

Vision: Arlington will be a place that's welcoming to all and where the diversity that each of us brings is celebrated and mutually respected.

Goals: Provide a way for different groups in town doing related work to coalesce and coordinate their initiatives and efforts where appropriate.

Reach out to people in town, including those who are not normally part of these initiatives, and help us as a community, confront the fear of change.

Adopt cohesive measures to address incidences of hate when they happen in Arlington.

There was much discussion regarding the vision and purpose of ACT. Commissioner Deshler made a motion that the Commission appoint Commissioners Schultz, Cohen and Baron to act as our representatives in discussions with ACT regarding language used by ACT in its literature that confuses ACT's and the HRC's respective roles in town; and that these commissioners suggest to ACT alternative language which they believe, in their opinion, be acceptable to the Commission." Commissioner Shea seconded this motion.

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b. **MAHRC update** – meeting for this month was cancelled.

Incident and Complaints –

Commissioner Shea reported on his meeting with the respondent to this complaint. Commissioner Deshler moved to close the file and consider the complaint completed. Both parties of this complaint will be informed by mail that the AHRC has closed the file regarding this case. Motion seconded by Commissioner Shea.

October Old Colony and Drake Village complaint applications have still not been returned.

Subcommittee Reports –

Dialogues –

Bullying Dialogue – Commissioner Rhoads is finalizing plans with the panel of speakers for the December 3rd dialogue on bullying to be held at Robbins Library at 7:30. Because of the freeze on all town expenditures there will not be a special mailing for this event. Commissioner Rhoads will publicize this dialogue through various town internet sites and the Advocate. A motion was made to use the monies from the HRC donation account in the amount of \$200.00 for the MARC speaker. Commissioner Deshler seconded the motion.

January Dialogue – Commissioner Baron is working with a holocaust survivor as a possible speaker for a January event – tba

Disabilities Dialogue – Commissioner Schultz is finalizing plans for the March 4th dialogue

Schools – Commissioners Rhoads, Shea and Sweeney have planned to meet with Bryan Gallagher, the AHS Resource Officer, on 11/14.

Policies and Procedures – no report

Rapid Response/Publicity – no report

Other Business –

MLK Annual Event – request for \$50 donation to co-sponsor this event is in question at this time because of freeze on all town accounts.

Chief Ryan has contacted Commissioner Rhoads requesting HRC feedback regarding our meeting with him last month. There was much discussion in regard to the policing presentation. Because of the lateness of the hour, it was decided to table further discussion until our next meeting in December.

Commissioner Baron moved to adjourn. Commissioner Schultz seconded. The meeting was concluded.

Submitted by:
Marylynn Carnell
Staff Assistant